

# Nation

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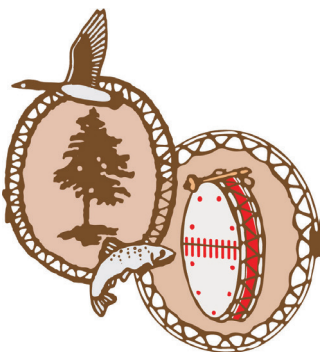
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Violent Ground  
Photo by  
Carlos Guerra





A Facebook post featuring a social studies workbook has gone viral and has people from across the country talking. Initially posted by Destiny Samaroo, it's now been shared over 3800 times and features a photo with a block of text from the book that reads: "When European settlers arrived, they needed land to live on. The First Nations people agreed to move to different areas to make room for the new settlements."

While outraged like the rest who shared or commented on the post, I'm not surprised. What's sad is that even in this new time of nation-to-nation relationships and reconciliation, children are still expected to learn, believe and regurgitate these mistruths in order to pass.

It wasn't different in my elementary school. I remember a mention of Louis Riel's Red River Rebellion in Grade 4 but nothing of the many millennia of Indigenous history predating that brief act of defiance.

The funny thing is that throughout elementary and high school, whenever

the subject of First Nations arose I was looked at as the only resident expert in my class. But when my classmates looked to me for answers I had to tell them, "Hey, I didn't learn about this stuff in school either."

Don't get me wrong, I know more than your average Canadian because my parents took the time to educate me about the history, rights and complex identity I carry, but I'm by no means an expert. It wasn't until university that I was able to learn these things in a classroom setting, and even then it was marked by disappointment.

One of the courses I took as an undergrad was "Indigenous Lit." I showed up bright-eyed and bushy-tailed for a class that I thought would be a breeze. I mean, I'm Indigenous, and I like to think I can "Lit". But I quickly learned that this course wasn't really for me.

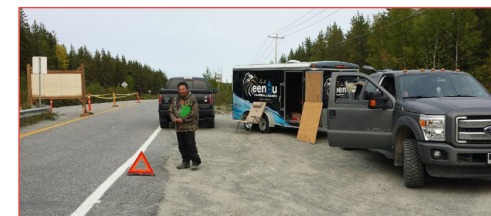
To her credit, our white professor did her best to incorporate a diverse lens, and she was much better read on the subject than I. Even so, it dawned on me during the first week that this

course was for the well intentioned yet western educated. In other words, for the now semi-grown children who didn't have an Indigenous parent to contextualize the mistruths of our social studies classes.

Is it the job of Indigenous people to educate our ill-informed counterparts? Must we always fill the gaps of information left by the public school system?

In fact, the onus has always be on us to start the conversation that questions past wrongs. If we don't accept that responsibility we should have been born to someone else. But what this stupid, racist, cowardly Stephen Harper-esque textbook has taught us is that the conversations we're starting are making a difference.

Indigo and other bookstores have pulled the workbook from their shelves as a result of non-Indigenous people calling out the publisher Popular Book Company Canada Ltd. and people are waking up.



## Cree priority

By Nick Wapachee

Cree construction companies encounter tensions in awarded contracts

Two Cree business owners facing non-Cree competitors in their communities say the outside firms are causing tensions when contracts are awarded.

Kenny Norman Neeposh (Eenou Plumbing and Heating) and Patrick Dixon (Westao Construction) are two entrepreneurs who say they face unfair competition.

Neeposh, an Oujé-Bougoumou resident, held a peaceful five-day protest September 14-18 to demand that Cree entities favour Cree companies in their community when it comes to awarding contracts.

"I was happy to see a lot of people coming by to support me," Neeposh said. "There were all types – teachers, students, truck drivers and carpenters."

Neeposh said he gave a letter to Oujé-Bougoumou Chief Curtis Bosum to remind him of Elders' vision to have Crees run their own affairs.

"Since that happened, everything changed," Neeposh said. "The chief came to me and said, 'We support you.'"

Bosum said that he wasn't disturbed by the demonstrations, and supported the demands of local companies and enterprises.

"This was why I decided to run for the office of chief," he said. "We agree that more contracts and more employment needs to be available to our community members."

Bosum said that changes in entity structures have been made since his election. He wants to guarantee local businesses and enterprises have access to contracts in the community.

"We see this protest as an opportunity for real dialogue," he said. "It's an opportunity to figure out how we can do a better job of doing what we all agree needs to be done."

Neeposh said that he wants to warn those who are starting their businesses and looking for partnerships. He was involved in a joint venture with a non-Cree, and claims that the partnership wasn't really working for him.

"It was an issue with money," said Neeposh, who later received a letter from his partner saying he was pulling

out of the joint venture. I don't want [young entrepreneurs] to go through with what happened to me."

Patrick Dixon, who lives in Eastmain, said the solution is to have a Cree construction company in their community direct contracts to local businesses.

"Someone who knows what he's doing, and knows what he's talking about – that should be the person responsible for those contracts," said Dixon.

Dixon says he's witnessed too many non-Cree companies come into his community and land contracts over his professional services.

"It's here where things need to be worked out," he said. "The Cree person responsible will know where to sub-contract in their community, that's the person who's going to help his community."

Last year, Dixon's business generated no income for about six months, and he was forced to find another job in the community. "I fought hard to help people, and to help myself in my business," he said.

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**CONTACT US:** The Nation, 4529 CLARK, #403, Montreal, QC, H2T 2T3 **EDITORIAL & ADS:** Tel.: 514-272-3077, Fax: 514-278-9914 **HEAD OFFICE:** P.O. Box 151, Chisasibi, QC. J0M 1E0 **www.nationnews.ca** **EDITORIAL:** nation@nationnews.ca **news@nationnews.ca** **ADS:** Danielle Valade: ads@nationnews.ca Wendall Gull: wendall@nationnews.ca Mike Ryan: sales@nationnews.ca **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** \$60 plus taxes, US: \$90, Abroad: \$110, Payable to beesum communications, all rights reserved, publication mail #40015005, issn #1206-2642 **The Nation is a member of:** The James Bay Cree Communications Society, Circle Of Aboriginal Controlled Publishers, Magazines Canada Quebec Community Newspaper Assn. Canadian Newspapers Assn. Les Hebdomadaires Du Québec. Funded [in part] by the Government of Canada.

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October 17-18, 2017	Cree Nation of Waswanipi	Community Health & Fitness Centre	17th (2-5pm, 6-9pm) 18th (9am-12pm, 6-9pm)
October 24-25, 2017	Cree Nation of Nemaska	Recreation Hall	6:00 - 9:00pm
November 14-15, 2017	Cree Nation of Wemindji	Community Hall	7:00 - 10:00pm
December 12-13, 2017	Waskaganish First Nation	KKL Conference Room	6:30 - 9:30pm
January 16-17, 2018	Cree Nation of Eastmain	*To be confirmed	TBD
February 20-21, 2018	Washaw Sibi	*To be confirmed	TBD
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- The contest ends on October 31
- Shipping is at participant's expense

**Do not forget:**

- Hints on the ground: look for rusty surfaces
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PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

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COMMUNITY \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE LOCATION PLACE NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MAP \_\_\_\_\_

GPS COORDINATES \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ N

SAMPLE COLLECTED FROM ☐ Shore Line ☐ Island

☐ Stream Bank ☐ River Bank ☐ Lake Side ☐ Mountain ☐ Other

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Photo provided by Mark Anto

# Spreading the word

**CSB wins award** for innovative summer reading camps by Amy German

**T**he Cree School Board has been awarded the college's prestigious Fitzpatrick Award for the summer literacy camps it established in Eeyou Istchee five years ago in partnership with Frontier College.

CSB School Operations Director Kim Quinn is deeply honoured by the award, as winners in recent years have included groups like Scholastic Canada and the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

"We got this award in recognition for outstanding services in the mission of literacy for all and furthering literacy in all our communities," explained Quinn. "Not only do our camps reach over 600 young Crees each summer, we have involved more parents in promoting family literacy, and we have incorporated Cree cultural language elements into the camp experience."

A graduate of McGill and Harvard universities, Quinn has dedicated her career to bringing the children of Eeyou Istchee up to grade level in terms of literacy and to give them literacy material by ensuring that there is a guaran-

teed and viable curriculum and stronger resources in the grade level for literacy.

The camps were created as a means of preventing summer reading loss when children are out of the classroom for two months. During their vacation, some students never touch a book, leading to a loss of knowledge by the time school starts in September.

According to Quinn, the camps have grown according to the culture and needs of each community.

"What I love about these camps is that they keep getting more popular and our communities have connected with them and made them their own. Each camp is the different, because we have responded to the needs of each community. Though they all promote the same important elements, they have their own unique identity," said Quinn.

This year, the camps hired 20 Cree counsellors out of a total of 44, for the first time making it possible to have Cree counsellors in every community. The year's attendance reached 646 and those children took home a total of

2178 books at the end of the camp to their own home libraries.

Campers spent an average of 68 minutes a day reading and an average of 98 minutes of outdoor play doing physical activities. When polled at the end of the summer, practically every parent said that they would recommend the experience to other families.

Quinn stated that while the CSB had a vision of setting up reading camps in all the communities, none of it would have been possible without Frontier College staff and their ability to set up camps on such a large scale. Quinn thanked them profusely for their effort, knowledge and expertise.

"I commend them because they made this possible for us. When we began we wanted to start big, it was a huge endeavour to do nine camps in nine different communities. We didn't want to do a handful of communities because we wanted to be able to give equal resources to all of our communities so that they could have access to something very special," said Quinn.





## Congratulations to the newly elected Chief and Council of the Cree Nation of Wemindji

Chief, Christina Gilpin  
Deputy Chief, Arden Visitor

Bradley A.J. Georgekish, Councillor  
Elmer Georgekish, Councillor  
Paul John Murdoch, Councillor  
Stanley Shashaweskum, Councillor  
Ernest Tomatuk, Councillor

*On behalf of the Chairman and Board of Directors  
of the Board of Compensation and Creeco.*



Photo credit by Cree Nation of Wemindji

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## Gunner family reunited

After a year-long, international custody battle and more than a decade of traveling to Egypt to visit, Candy Gunner arrived in Montreal October 2 with her teenage daughters Fatma and Aisha.

"It feels surreal...like I'm dreaming," said Gunner after landing at Trudeau Airport.

Gunner, who is from Mississauga, moved to Egypt with the girls' father when her daughters were infants, but returned to Canada a short time later to deal with an illness. Since then, it's been a struggle to remain a presence in her daughters' lives. Last October, Candy moved to Egypt to fight for custody of the girls – who were eager to return – through the Egyptian court system.

The Cree Nation Government helped coordinate Gunner's legal battle while many Crees donated to her GoFundMe page. It wasn't until the final week of September that she was able to secure the necessary papers to bring the girls back to Canada.

When Gunner and her daughters arrived at Montreal's Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport, they were greeted by a group of relatives, including the girls' grandfather, Morley Gunner. It was the first time he'd met the girls in person.

On October 2, Eeyou Communications Network (ECN) crews began the long job of installing new fibre-to-the-home feeds in the community of Wemindji. Over the next weeks, technicians will visit communities and lay the cables for the new Triple-Play-Plus high-speed Internet, toll-free-telephones and all-channels TV service. The work is expected to be completed and in operation by spring 2018.



Photos by Gaston Cooper

## ECN installations

## The passing of a rocker

It is with great sadness that we here at the Nation express our condolences for the passing of Roger House on October 1. Roger was a founding member of the Fort George Rockers and likely one of the first Crees to own an electric guitar. Chisasibi's rock pioneer was known throughout the Cree Nation for his music and his friendly smile. Roger was a man who inspired others to follow their dreams and to be satisfied with who they were. Lloyd Cheechoo said Roger "was the songwriter for us." He will be profoundly missed. Rest in Peace, Roger, the Cree "Beaver Man."

## Design issues

Due to production problems, some pages of our last issue (Vol. 24, No 24) may have been challenging to read; the Nation apologizes if anyone experienced difficulties. We would also like to acknowledge that last issue's (Vol. 24, No 24) design was mistakenly attributed to Matthew Dessner when it was in fact designed by David Allen. We hope you enjoy this issue.

## National Housing & Infrastructure Forum

The Assembly of First Nations invites you to the  
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# THE ROBIN'S NEST

**Waswanipi shelter** offers a safe haven for abused women and children

by Will Nicholls

Photos by Katherine Morrow & Will Nicholls

**T**hey say it takes a community to raise a child but the Cree have learned it takes one to protect women also. Robin's Nest, a women's shelter located in Waswanipi, opened its doors on September 25.

Linda L. Shecapio, the president of the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association, said she is happy there are now services and help for abused women and children but is nonetheless sad that it is needed. Shecapio said that violence against women was not part of the traditional way of life for the Cree. She hopes that it won't be needed beyond a few years, and that healing and help goes beyond just Cree women and extends to men, children and the whole community.

Many of the people who spoke at the grand opening ceremony shared her dream of a time when there would be no need for women's shelters in Eeyou Istchee.

Daniel St-Amour, Executive Director for the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB), said the Piipiichaa Uchishtuun (Robin's Nest) Women's Shelter is a historic milestone.

"The shelter's name derives from the Cree legend of Ayaashaaow, which speaks of transformation, healing and reconciliation. And this is what we will be striving for with this facility," he said. "Our objective is to transform the lives of women and children who have suffered from domestic violence, to heal them of their wounds, and, ultimately, to support a process of

Robin's Nest has a mission to use **Cree traditions and values** in healing both women and children who have experienced domestic violence while respecting individual beliefs. There will be various options for reconciliation, rehabilitation and reintegration.



will strengthen miyupimaatisiun in our communities and across Eeyou Istchee.”

St-Amour noted that Health Board Chairperson Bella Moses Petawabano had expressed her own sorrow that, for the first time in the thousands of years of Cree history, a shelter was needed to protect women and children from domestic violence.

Many people and entities worked to make the shelter possible, including the Cree Nation Government, Cree Justice Department, the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association, the Cree School Board and the Cree Nation of Waswanipi.

“So you can see that this project, like many others, is one that requires we unite our strengths and knowledge to ensure the health of our people,” said St-Amour. “Robin’s Nest will support women 24 hours a day, every day. It will offer crisis management, culturally appropriate helping methods, and a network of local services and programs, including professional services from the CBHSSJB. It will also serve a stepping stone that will help women access already-existing services, and it will create lasting links to resources so that when women return to their home communities, their networks of support will be strong and resilient.”

Ungava MNA Jean Boucher observed that asking for help is never easy. “Having to leave your community can be an additional challenge,” Boucher said, “which is why the time has come for the communities to have their own shelters.”

Native Affairs Minister Geoffrey Kelley said resources were needed to address social and economic impacts caused by problems related to family and spousal violence.

“I believe that we all have a duty to work together to come



*This project, like many others, is one that requires we **unite our strengths** and knowledge to ensure the health of our people*

*- Daniel St-Amour, Executive Director for the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay*







# INVITATION



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The Cree Nation  
Government and Quebec  
shared the **\$4.6 million**  
**cost** to build the shelter.



exposure to violence and abuse. This must change, he insisted. One way is to address the overcrowding and lack of adequate housing.

"Severely overcrowded housing in the Cree communities create conditions ripe for tension and abuse, and drive too many Crees from our communities. Until this single issue is addressed, violence and abuse toward women will continue," said Bosum.

Bosum, Shecapio and Kelley then participated in a lacing ceremony. Unlike a ribbon-cutting ceremony, the lacing ceremony ties together the different partners who were needed to make the opening of the women's shelter possible.

The inland women's shelter will be able to accommodate 18 women, including their children. On hand will be 19 workers to support women in their time of need. It houses a meditation room, a children's play area, an entertainment room and a kitchen.

The Cree Nation Government and Quebec shared the \$4.6 million cost to build the shelter. A long-term agreement was negotiated with Quebec's Health and Social Services Ministry to fund its operational budget.

Robin's Nest has a mission to use Cree traditions and values in healing both women and children who have experienced domestic violence while respecting individual beliefs. There will be various options for reconciliation, rehabilitation and reintegration.

A crisis line is being set up for women to call for assistance and possible admission to the shelter. During the call, the level of support needed both immediately and long-term will be determined. The Nation will publish the number when it becomes available.

A second shelter is being built in Waskaganish and will open in 2018.





# RAISING RED FLAGS

**WWF report** a cause for concern in Eeyou Istchee

by Ben Powless

**A** new World Wildlife Fund Canada report is raising red flags among staff of the Cree Nation Government (CNG).

The WWF study, Living Planet Report Canada, suggests that hundreds of species across the country have faced huge declines in numbers over the past 40 years, when the study began.

Looking at 900 species across the country for which there are data, the study found that roughly half had declined over that period, while 45% saw increases in population. Only 5% had stable population numbers.

The real significance wasn't that half of the species had declined – that much could nearly be expected if animals were following simple boom and bust cycles known to ecologists.

Instead, it's the scale of the decline. On average, of those species on the decline, they've lost 83% of their numbers. That means some have lost less, while some have lost even more. Averaged across all animals, there was still an 8% decline.

There are six main conclusions highlighted in the report:

- **Habitat loss:** less land (and water) for animals. This comes from human development – expanding urban

areas, roads, dams, forestry, agriculture, etc;

- **Climate change:** the report notes that climate change is felt twice as strongly in Canada as in the rest of the world. Meanwhile, oceans are rising and acidifying, our seasons are changing, precipitation patterns are unpredictable, and many animals either can't move or can't adapt fast enough;

- **Pollution:** toxins and chemicals that come from the use of pesticides, sewage, agricultural runoff, plastic waste and microplastics.

- **Invasive species:** this is why there's an effort to get people to clean their boats off when moving between bodies of water. The introduction of predatory foreign species results in an overconsumption of food that local species depend upon, or preys upon native marine animals;

- **Overexploitation:** hunting, fishing, trapping. This is particularly true in the oceans, where many species like sharks end up caught by accident;

- **Cumulative and cascading effects:** when more than one of the previous drivers combine, it can make the problem much worse, much faster, leading to further population declines.

The WWF report focused on mammals, fish, birds, reptiles and amphibians. Researchers also broke down the species by their distribution.

Animal species found in freshwater were mostly stable, thanks to conservation efforts were begun in the 1970s because many waterways were experiencing high levels of degradation at the time.

Animals found around marine (ocean) areas – mostly fish, with some birds and mammals – declined an average of 9% across the country.

The terrestrials, mostly made up of birds and some reptiles, declined by 9% since 1970.

The report also looked at the decline in species by geographic area, but noted that there was not enough baseline information starting in 1970 to include many Arctic species, which would include a number of species native to Eeyou Istchee.

Alan Penn, scientific adviser for the Cree Regional Authority's

Looking at **900 species** across the country for which there are data, the study found that roughly half had declined over that period, while 45% saw increases in population.



*Any decline  
in species is  
important...  
We depend on  
healthy species,  
healthy wildlife,  
for the culture  
to survive.*

- Nadia Saganash

Environment and Remedial Works Department, said he had "serious doubts" about whether the report's conclusions were likely to hold true for Eeyou Istchee.

"The question needs to be put to the WWF – how good is this information?" asked Penn. "Who is getting it? Who is responsible for managing this kind of data?"

Penn noted that most of the information known about protected species in Eeyou Istchee only comes out during environmental assessments, and that not all ecosystems across the territory may be well known. Most Crees wouldn't have direct experience or familiarity with many of the species named in the report, he added.

The value of the WWF report is to highlight the widespread species declines, Penn observed, as they may be relevant to the Cree territory. He intends to take up the issue with Cree leadership for further consideration.

Nadia Saganash, the Wildlife Management Administrator for the environment department, was much more concerned. "Any decline in species is important. We depend on healthy species, healthy wildlife, for the culture to survive," she stated.

"We can see there's a lot of species of concern in the territory, that's at risk. We have several – notably woodland caribou, barren-ground caribou and the lake sturgeon are of concern, as well as polar bears and wolverines."

Saganash agreed with Penn that it would be beneficial to undertake a similar study within Eeyou Istchee.

The territory has dealt with similar issues. Saganash noted there was a sharp decline in the wolf population in the 1990s that became a concern to the Cree Nation. Drastic measures were taken to address the issue, resulting in changes to forestry laws to protect the animals.

Woodland caribou and barren-ground caribou numbers were in decline as well, Saganash said, with impacts on food security. She said that for the woodland caribou, forestry and habitat degradation are the main factors behind the decline.

The barren-ground caribou was a more complex situation, with natural population cycles over the decades, but there have also been pressures put on them because of various harvests and predators, as well as their access to food, Saganash noted.

A project was put into place to monitor the natural reintroduction of wolverines into the territory, since they had been effectively extinct in the territory for many years, and are considered endangered by the federal government.

Penn explained that many Cree are not entirely enthusiastic about the reintroduction of wolverines, being a particularly destructive animal that's difficult to harvest and which destroys other animal traps. Regardless, their increased presence has been detected across the territory.

The most concerning development, both Penn and Saganash agree, concerns lake sturgeon. The James Bay population is listed as of special concern by the federal government.

Saganash explained that in Eeyou Istchee, there have been impacts on the sturgeon from dams, road construction over their spawning grounds, as well as the harvest.

It's a species that needs to be monitored, since it can take up to 25 years for a female to spawn, and it is big and slow-moving.

With the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975, this population of lake sturgeon was reserved exclusively for the Cree.

However, Penn explained, this also gave the federal government an excuse to ignore its status, and to justify not supporting the Cree government's efforts at conservation.

"Because it's in the land claims agreement, they simply don't deal with it. That's also to some extent true with the caribou. If they sense that a species is being used by a Native group, they say that there's nothing they can do about it," explained Penn, who added that the CNG doesn't have the resources to adequately implement the type of conservation needed.

Penn doubts that the federal government or the province will get involved, leaving the onus on the Cree to protect dwindling animal stocks. That includes raising awareness among Cree hunters and fishers to explain that these species may not survive much longer if current harvesting and development practices continue.

According to Saganash, this also means that more resources have to be put into wildlife monitoring. "Currently there's only two staff members at the CNG in the wildlife unit, it's difficult to follow all these issues in the territory," she explained.

According to the Paix des Braves agreement, she noted, there are provisions for hiring Cree conservation officers, which currently is still under Quebec's jurisdiction.

The report concluded with a number of calls to action, focused on increased monitoring and sharing of data, more research and an increased response to the threat of climate change, and an expansion of protected areas.

Launching the report, David Miller, WWF-Canada's President and CEO, said that, "People do have the power to make a difference by becoming citizen scientists, restoring habitat, embracing a low-carbon lifestyle and supporting the decisions that government, industry and communities need to make. By taking action we can, collectively, ensure more wildlife don't land on the at-risk list in the first place."



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Dale Steven  
Field worker, Waskaganish



Estuary and mouth of the Rupert



Ricky Weistche  
Field worker, Waskaganish

Each month, a new video will be added to [hydloandfriends.com](http://hydloandfriends.com). To learn more, listen to the Hydlo and Friends radio show on JBCCS. Its hosts, Luke MacLeod and Luc Duquette, discuss the environmental follow-up activities related to the Eastmain-Sarcelle-Rupert complex, as well as the concerns of land users with regard to Hydro-Québec's facilities and activities.

**Next show:**  
Wednesday, October 18,  
at 8:00 a.m.





If it hadn't been for **widespread public pressure**, the hearing might not have happened in the first place.

# SEEKING JUSTICE

THE CREE SUBMISSION TO QUEBEC'S INQUIRY ON RELATIONS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE MAKES WAVES

by Ben Powless | Photos provided by Catherine Bérubé-Leblanc

**W**hen Donald Nicholls walked into the dark, cavernous rooms of the Val-d'Or music conservatory, he was searching for justice, but didn't know if he would find it there.

This wasn't entirely new to Nicholls: walking into a large hall, papers everywhere, people adorned with suits and stern faces, ready to listen. He would have encountered similar situations in negotiations and meetings at the United Nations in both New York and Geneva, with the Organization of American States, or in numerous courts across the Americas.

For the Director of the Cree Nation Government (CNG) Department of Justice and Correctional Services, however, the September 15 hearing was much closer to home. If it hadn't been for widespread public pressure, the hearing might not have happened in the first place.

During a Radio-Canada investigative news program in October 2015, several Indigenous women and men accused 28 Sûreté du Québec officers based in Val-d'Or of abuse, intimidation and even "starlight tours" – the practice of driving sometimes inebriated people outside city limits, often in winter, to walk home. The practice gained notoriety after the 1990 death of Neil Stonechild in Saskatoon, and was later found to be a common form of summary punishment for Native people.

After a year of investigation, provincial crown prosecutors announced there would be no charges filed against any of the police officers subject to

complaints. (Two other officers outside Val-d'Or were charged on sexual assault charges going back to the 1980s and 1990s.)

Many were quick to condemn the decision, saying that it would further poison relationships between police and Indigenous people. There were repeated calls for a judicial inquiry, which the Quebec government initially ruled out, saying it would conflict with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

For their part, crown prosecutors explained that this didn't mean the incidents didn't happen – simply that there wasn't enough evidence to obtain a conviction. Meanwhile, SQ officers maintained their innocence, and went on to sue Radio-Canada for \$2.3 million for defamation for originally airing the allegations.

However, as pressure mounted, Quebec ceded to demands to act. In December 2016, Premier Philippe Couillard announced the Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Quebec (CERP for its French acronym).

---

When Nicholls finally sat down in front of the CERP commissioner and his staff on that warm September day he detailed a litany of Cree Nation programs and activities that related to the justice system for nearly two hours.







Naskapi hip-hop group Violent Ground  
**hits the big stage** in Montreal



Photos by Carlos Guerra

# GAINING\_GROUND

by Joshua Grant





It doesn't take long to see that brothers Allan "Lyrik" and Christian "Naskapi" Nabinacaboo are serious about hip-hop – they live and breathe it. Their passion for rapping shines through their actions, words and personas, both on stage and off.

Fresh from a tour through the communities of James Bay and northern Quebec, including a stop at the Wild Berry Festival in Whapmagoostui, the Nation caught up with the Naskapi rappers, their Cree/Naskapi manager Steve Einish and newly added DJ "JYB" (Benjamin Marain dos Reis) at a special performance at Montreal's Club Soda September 23.

Their group is known as Violent Ground. Thanks to Einish's hustle and the Nabinacaboo's growing reputation, they were given the opportunity to open for Missouri's hip-hop legend Tech N9ne.

Einish's networking efforts in the city, specifically a connection with Rickey Daley of Rickey D Events, were key. Daley is a Montreal promoter who has booked the likes of Wu-Tang Clan, A Tribe Called Quest, the Roots and the Fugees. He clearly respects Violent Ground's talent as well as their efforts to raise awareness of the histories and realities of the Naskapi and all Indigenous people in Canada.

When Violent Ground's set was pushed back by an hour because of a curfew imposed by the venue, the two took it in stride and still delivered a powerful set. Naskapi and Lyrik complement each other on stage and it's obvious they've been honing their craft for years. Each verse was delivered with precision and each bar was well thought out.

They performed songs about growing up in Naskapi, representing their community and family, and the hard work they've put in on the road. More serious themes in their raps addressed the history of colonization, the trauma of residential schools and the feelings of isolation, boredom and loneliness all too common among youth growing up on a reserve.

Still, the message was one of hope. If two Aboriginal kids who started out rapping in their mom's basement in Naskapi can make it all the way to the stage of Club Soda, so can anyone.





## Taapwaauchaayimiisu Believe In Yourself

### OUR PROGRAM

**Taapwaauyimiisu (Believe in yourself)** program is a resource available for the schools in the three Cree communities, where the pilot project is currently being launched. We offer support to the students' ages 12 to 17 years old who, for various reasons, are temporarily suspended from 3 to 5 days from school.

The expression **"Believe in yourself"** is dear to our program as we want to send a strong message of empowerment and self-worth to our youth.

### OUR SERVICE SITES

Taapwaauchaayimiisu program in Mistissini has officially moved in their new service site at the Family Resource Centre (Old Youth Centre). Thank you, Cree Nation of Mistissini, for your collaboration in providing space for our youth.

We would also like to thank everyone that attended our open houses in Waskaganish and Chisasibi.

Should you require more information, please contact the coordinator.

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E-mail: [Byyourself@cngov.ca](mailto:Byyourself@cngov.ca)



*Front row: Destiny (Christians girlfriend), Christian, Christina (Allan's Mom), Mary (Allan's Sister), Auntie Bernadette;*

*Back row: Steve, Allan, Thomas (cousin)*

**"If two people from a community of 1200 can make it to the city to open for Tech N9ne, anyone can do it!"**

- Lyrik

"A big opportunity presented itself," said Einish, speaking on the chance for Violent Ground to open for an established artist. "And I took it, 'cuz I felt they were ready."

Einish learned sound engineering at Recording Arts Canada and is currently studying artist management at Trebas Institute. His work ethic, dedication and love of music are paying dividends for both him and his crew.

On the road up north, Einish was the Violent Ground soundman as well as their manager. When he wasn't shaking hands or bobbing his head to the beat at Club Soda, he was meeting friends and family members outside the venue to get them their tickets. It's clear that this manager truly cares about his people.

"I'm not a manager who just calls the shots," he said. "We talk about our plans as a unit. We work as a team and it's going good – it's a good formula."

As for rappers Lyrik and Naskapi, opening up for Tech N9ne and the Strange Music crew was a dream come true.

"It means a lot to us because we grew up listening to Tech N9ne, we always used to share his videos," said Lyrik. "We also have a similar style. He talks about the same things, in his own terms, and the way he tries to explain what he's been through. That's what we're trying to do."

A huge motivation for the Nabinacaboo brothers is to "give our place a name," Naskapi said.

"Our nation, our reserve, we want to put the Naskapi on the map. We're here, we live way up north and we're still doing something. We were discovered around 50 years ago by the government and they settled us there, so I think it's good that in that short amount of time we're coming out and making a name for ourselves."

Seeing Lyrik and Naskapi deliver not only a stellar performance but also enjoy an evening of fun with their friends and family, the positive impact of music on their lives was readily

apparent. The brothers were jumping up and down, arms around each other, joyfully rapping along with Tech N9ne during the headliner's performance.

"[Music] inspires people," said Lyrik, a few minutes before going on stage. "It inspires kids to get away from booze, to get out to the city, to work really hard and to make their names known. If two people from a community of 1200 can make it to the city to open for Tech N9ne, anyone can do it!" Violent Ground's self-titled 2014 album is currently available on iTunes, and the group plans to release a new EP in late 2017. For booking information contact them at [violentground@hotmail.com](mailto:violentground@hotmail.com).



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by Joshua Grant

## Eeyou Istchee considers its options as legal marijuana legislation approaches

One of Justin Trudeau's 226 election promises in 2015 was to legalize the recreational use of cannabis in Canada. Despite breaking or ignoring several campaign commitments it appears that his Liberal government will follow through on this one.

As Canada prepares for legal marijuana on July 1, 2018, the provinces and territories are scrambling to get distribution models ready, Quebec and Eeyou Istchee included.

*"We're not sure just exactly  
what's going to be reetailed — there  
are lots of unanswered questions"*

- Grand Chief Abel Bosum



The Nation spoke with Grand Chief Abel Bosum about how the Cree Nation Government plans to approach the reality of legal weed in Cree communities.

"As Grand Chief I need to take into account advice from a number of people, in particular the Cree Health Board," Bosum said. "They will be the frontline workers should the marijuana legislation go forward. They have

already begun looking at some of the potential impacts."

Bosum noted that it's important to distinguish between medical and recreational cannabis. For now, the focus is on consulting with the chief and council of each Cree community, health professionals, and all levels of government to carefully plan their approach.

"We understand that there are two types of marijuana: one for medical

purposes and one for recreation. This legislation that we're dealing with is specifically for recreation," he said. "Medical marijuana is already being tested and approved by medical centres whereas recreational marijuana is not. We're not sure just exactly what's going to be reetailed — there are lots of unanswered questions."

Bosum has already met with the Cree Health Board and was briefed





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on a Quebec National Assembly consultation with First Nations leaders in late September over draft legislation that he was unable to attend. On October 4, the Cree Nation Government held a preliminary council board meeting on the issue with the chiefs of each Cree community.

The provinces will now decide how they will govern, manage and control it, he explained. "There's going to be legislation introduced sometime in June. This will determine what the rules are going to be: for everything from the producer to the manufacturer to the distributors."

Bosum said the Quebec government was looking for reaction from Indigenous communities in the province – many of which are opposed to the sale of marijuana on reserve. The age of majority to purchase legal pot in Quebec will likely be 18 and the regulatory controls will be similar to those concerning alcohol, but much remains to be determined.

For instance, how would authorities determine if someone has consumed too much marijuana to drive? Alcohol is easily detected and measured, but the technology to test saliva samples for a driver's THC levels is not readily available. In Eeyou Istchee, Bosum said, it would be important to raise awareness surrounding the dangers of driving all sorts of motor vehicles while stoned, whether it's a car, truck, boat, ATV or snowmobile.

"I think whatever legislation is passed is going to have to cover all of that – every kind of vehicle," said the Grand Chief. "At a minimum, it has to be that."

Education has to start at with young children, Bosum insisted.

"We know that some kids are already smoking at the age of 10-12," he observed. "Parents need to know what the effects are and teach their kids."

Bosum also believes cannabis is a gateway drug.

"For sure, it's true," he said. "You start something and then if the recreational marijuana isn't good enough, you're going to go out and look for something on the street. And then

you're back to all the junkie stuff that's being pushed in our communities."

Bosum notes that Canada's health workers are very concerned about recreational marijuana because they know that there are long-term effects related to casual use.

"As far as First Nations are concerned, the Cree Nation is going to have to make a decision," he declared. "Right now, in the instance of alcohol, it's a dry reserve. So once the legislation comes in or even before, there has to be a decision as to whether or not we incorporate that in our bylaw."

The Cree Nation Government's principle objective is to understand the pending federal and provincial legislation and study the recommendations

of public health departments before deciding how the Cree Nation will handle legalization in each of the 10 communities.

"The preliminary feedback at the first meeting is that everybody is concerned about it," Bosum said. "Nobody is trying to rush into it and nobody has said that this is a good thing. I mean they're already having a lot of social problems related to alcohol and having marijuana retail shops will just add to the stress and the problems that now exist in our communities."

"Having said that, I think we all recognize that it's going to be an individual's choice. It's like having a cigarette. It's your right to smoke or not."

*"As far as First Nations are concerned, the Cree Nation is going to have to **make a decision**"*

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October 23, 2017



# Between the pipes

**Cree goaltender  
Trevor Cooper** joins  
elite ranks with Lac  
St-Louis Lions

by Dan Coyle | Photos provided by Gaston Cooper

**A** young Cree hockey player took a huge step in his budding hockey career this fall with the news that he had cracked the lineup for the Midget AAA Lac St-Louis Lions.

After attending a grueling training camp with no guarantee of a roster spot, Ouje-Bougoumou's Trevor Cooper received the good news that he would play goal for the Lions, joining an illustrious group of current and former NHL players who honed their craft in Montreal's West Island, including Montreal Canadiens star Jonathan Drouin, Arizona Coyotes sniper Anthony Duclair, and two-time Stanley Cup winner Martin Lapointe.

It has been a tough road for this hockey-mad teenager. At 6' 8" tall, Cooper is an intimidating presence between the pipes. But with just a few years of experience as a goaltender, Lions coach Jon Goyens believes that Cooper has plenty of room to grown his game.

"Any kid of Trevor's physical stature will always be labeled a project," explained Goyens, who has amassed over two decades of coaching experience.

"But we have never selected a goaltender based on size. In Trevor's case, we picked a goaltender who has demonstrated smarts and commitment,

and has come a long way due to hard work, and studying YouTube videos."

Cooper's hockey journey started three years ago, when he expressed a clear desire to compete at an elite level. The 16-year-old got his first taste of elite competition while playing for the Bantam BB Pirates in Dollard-des-Ormeaux before advancing to Bantam AA, and then moving on to Lac St-Louis Midget Espoirs Predateurs last season.

The experience at Lions training camp proved challenging for Cooper, who was one of 12 goaltenders to enter tryouts this past spring, and the last one standing among the six to attend fall training camp.

"I did have a lot of competition for my roster spot," explained Cooper in conversation with the Nation. "They were all very skilled and talented goaltenders attending camp. Luckily, I was able to persevere through my hard work and training."

That hard work has remained a requirement as the regular season has gotten into full swing. Cooper took the loss in his first two appearances in the Lac St-Louis goal, but coach Goyens was far from discouraged by his young netminder's performance.

"Trevor faced the best team in the league in his first start for us," said Goyens, referring to the Lions'

6-4 loss to the Magog Cantonniers on September 16.

"We are a team in its infancy, and Trevor has given us a chance to win."

It was only a matter of time before Cooper would lead the Lions to victory, with a 26-save performance in Lac St-Louis' 5-3 win over the Collège Charles-Lemoyne Riverains on September 29.

As a young man coming of age in the Montreal area it is no surprise that Cooper looks up to Canadiens superstar goaltender Carey Price, whom he admires for both his elite skill set and legendary calm demeanour on the ice. But Cooper also recognizes the obvious comparisons between him and Dallas Stars netminder Ben Bishop, who also stands 6' 8", and can provide insight into how to approach the game as a tall goaltender.

While hockey is clearly Cooper's passion, the mature teen also understands the importance that education plays for him, both now and the future. With that in mind, the Secondary V student has set his sights on using his rapidly developing skills to eventually earn a spot on a college hockey squad.

"Education is important," explained Cooper. "Very few players make it to the NHL, so education is my backup plan."

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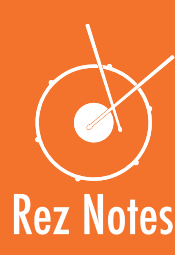
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## Relationships explained

by Errol Mianscum



**S**he asks, "Honey, how do you think we should do this?"

Don't answer, you don't need to. You could have the perfect answer but she's already decided what you are both going to do, how you are going to do it, when, where and what YOU are going to do. Marriage, bound together by love (still is of course), is no longer ruled by it.

When we were young, it was an exciting time being together, talking all night, sharing our dreams. Holding each other all night.

Add children.

Now the rules have changed, drastically.

How the better half (the woman) changes her whole life right away to make the baby's life as comfortable and loving as possible, seems to take us men just a little longer. Everything goes through our minds.

Do I have to trade in my car for a van? Don't do this, never do this! The minivan is for the wife when you can finally afford that second car. Stick to the car or the tough-looking pickup that's still suitable for the small family. Guys, if your buddy is driving a minivan and has only one child, you are free to laugh at him.

Will I still be able to go to the tournaments with the guys? Be very careful with this one, but be quick. You "ask" or tell her you're going and she gives you the "go ahead" answer. Say nothing. Don't pursue it. That "go ahead" is not her real answer because you SHOULD HAVE KNOWN what it really meant. That's why I say continue on with your day. When the time comes to go AND if the baby isn't sick, then you can go, because she said, "Go ahead." You can deal with the "you should have known" talk when you get back. But behave! If you don't? That's your last ever "free time" with the boys.

Here are some pointers to consider. Clean the house, do the dishes, do the laundry (if she lets you, because those machines are impossible to figure out), change the diapers, cook dinner, mow the lawn, paint the room, sweep the floor, make the beds, fix those holes, fix those doors (don't use hockey tape, she won't be impressed – I don't know why, it was ingenious). All of these chores will be mentally noted and could be banked for future outings.

I can't give advice to the women reading this because I'm just scared of them and I already know they won't listen anyways.

Being a family takes work on both sides: Making changes in your lives, sacrificing some of life's pleasures (sports) for the enjoyment of your children's activities. The rewards come from seeing your little ones' smiles and joy. The thank-yous, hugs, tears, bandaging of small cuts – these are some of the most gratifying moments in a parent's life.

We should never forget the ever-important date nights with your other halves. Ladies, it's the 21st century! Feel free to plan (and pay for) these too. A romantic supper at a restaurant, cooking for the spouse, evening walks or just talking and sharing your thoughts – all are necessary to a healthy marriage.

We can still go to the tournaments, but we're spectators. Now, we're taking our little ones to do their things, be it dancing, figure skating, track, football, karate, broomball, basketball or hockey. Our enjoyment has been moved to seeing the little ones chase and realize their dreams.

It took me a while to accept this change, but making the children and their development a top priority is now one of life's greatest joys.



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*Under the Northern Sky*  
**Bearing witness**  
 by Xavier Kataquapit



I received a note from my sister Janie Wesley this past week that included an historic document. Her message asked me to look at the image of a typewritten telegram or letter that was sent October 17, 1945. It detailed the admission list of children to be sent to the Albany Indian Residential School, including the name of my father, Marius Kataquapit, one of his brothers, and another uncle on my mother's side.

Janie pointed out that this letter was dated just a week before our father's fifth birthday. The other children on the list would have been about the same age.

In 1945, my father's family was living a traditional life on the land surrounded by their extended relations. They were fluent in the Cree language and had very little to do with European ways of living or communicating. Life revolved around surviving on the land following traditional practices, activities and ways of living that were thousands of years old.

I have often wondered how my father's father, James Kataquapit, looked at the European people in his life. His livelihood centred on the fur trade and how best to negotiate and gather income from English and French traders who bought the animal furs he had painstakingly gathered, prepared and transported over long distances. His meagre earnings would then be handed back to the same traders in return for a little food and goods he needed to keep his family alive. European settlers dominated even his spiritual life with Christian religion while suppressing our traditional spirituality.

In his 20s, he left to fight in the Great War for a "Kitchi-Okimaw" (a great leader or a king). He was gone for almost two years during the First World War, serving in the Canadian Forestry Corp in England. He witnessed the development created by

the "Mishtikooshoo" (the white man) in the south. He boarded a steel-hulled ship that took him over the great ocean and probably wondered if he would ever return. He visited lands on the other side of the world and saw the devastating effects of war, death and destruction.

He was content to be paid for his efforts but was happy to return home after the war. When he arrived in Canada and traveled north, he was simply dropped off at a wilderness rail stop near Hearst, Ontario. On his own, he followed a tributary of the Albany River north to James Bay and back to his family in Attawapiskat. After he arrived home, he learned that some of the young men he left with didn't return.

His homecoming left him in the same situation as when he left. The same European traders and church leaders managed his earnings. During his absence, his income from the war had evaporated with the excuse that it was used to provide for his parents and family. After going overseas for a war and serving the country of Canada for two years, he went back to living with nothing and surviving on the land with his own skill and abilities.

Later, middle-aged with children, the Canadian government forced him to surrender his young sons under the guise of education. Anyone who refused saw their children forcibly removed by

authorities. The family was told the boys would be gone for the winter and return in the spring, but both James and his wife Janie feared that their boys might never come home. This turned their world upside down and made them very sad and anxious. The boys did return but they were changed forever.

My father Marius had very little to say about his memories of his time in residential school. He confided that it was a painful time as he was thrust into a foreign world, filled with strangers who followed strange customs and spoke a foreign language. He felt that he was punished for being an Aboriginal person and that the separation from his parents at such a young age scarred him for life.

I was deeply moved by the document that my sister Janie forwarded to me. She received it from a family friend, Roseanne Sutherland, who works for Chiefs of Ontario and is researching the residential school era in the James Bay area. It is a sober reminder of the government policy of abducting all children from Aboriginal communities in an effort to assimilate our people. Thankfully it did not work, but this document bears witness to a crime that broke and bent our communities for generations.







Commission d'enquête  
sur les relations  
entre les Autochtones  
et certains  
services publics

Québec 

# Why should you participate to the Public Inquiry Commission?

Communicate with us:  
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- **Because this is your Inquiry** : The Inquiry Commission was established after leaders and Indigenous communities exerted pressure and called for a study on the systemic issues inherent to the relationship between Indigenous people and Quebec public services. In order to concretely identify the problems you are experiencing and to find solutions, your involvement is crucial.
  - **Because you know of the difficulties** present in your community and/or organization and that you can suggest improvements or changes.
  - **Because you have experienced an event** related to the six public services (police, correctional, justice, health, social and youth protection) investigated by the Commission and you can testify about it.
  - **Because you are best-placed** to raise public awareness on the issues and realities concerning your community and/or organization.
  - **Because you are able to present good practices or inspiring models** that were developed and recognized in your community and/or organization.
  - **Because you can contribute to the change, the progress and the reconciliation** by sharing your story, your experiences or by encouraging someone to do so.
- 





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